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Probablement, tout et tous – et nous-mêmes – ne sommes-nous que des rêves immédiats de la divine Matière:

Les produits textuels de sa prodigieuse imagination.

Et ainsi, en un sens, pourrait-on dire que la nature entière, y compris les hommes, n'est qu'une écriture; mais une écriture d'un certain genre; une écriture *non-significative*, du fait qu'elle ne se réfère à aucun système de signification ; qu'il s'agit d'un univers indéfini : à proprement parler *immense*, sans mesures.

Tandis que le monde des paroles est un univers fini.

Francis Ponge, "À la rêveuse matière."<sup>1</sup>

Δοκεῖ δὲ μέγα τι εἶναι καὶ χαλεπὸν ληφθῆναι ὁ τόπος.

Aristotle, *Physics IV*, 212a<sup>2</sup>

"Es scheint aber etwas Großmächtiges zu sein und schwer zu fassen, der Topos" – das heißt der Ort-Raum.

Martin Heidegger, "Die Kunst und der Raum"<sup>3</sup>

### ***The Imagination***

Philippe Lynes

In inquiring into what could constitute a new concept for materialism and its contributions to the study of our biopolitical futures, certain questions immediately impose themselves, namely concerning the status of new materialism's belonging to the lineage of dialectical materialism, and the latter's to dialectics, that is, to the work of the Concept as the consummation of Western metaphysics. How one inflects this belonging could thus result in a number of heterogeneous understandings of the stakes of a new materialist *Concept*; either in its dialectical sense or, following another strain of what has been called a 'non-dialectical materialism,'<sup>4</sup> corresponding to the Deleuzian task of philosophy as the creation of new concepts. Coole and Frost, in the first anthology of new materialist literature, indeed see the movement's task as "creating new *concepts and images* of nature that affirm matter's immanent vitality."<sup>5</sup> On this interpretation the alliance between new materialism and biopolitical thought seems a heavenly match brought down to earth; building from the Nietzschean inversion of Platonism and affirming the activity, agency, capacity, dynamism, force, intensity, liveliness, power, vibrancy and vitality of matter hand in hand with affirming the creative dimensions of ζωή or Life itself, the materialist dimensions of living labour and the biopolitical production of new subjectivities.<sup>6</sup> Such an affirmative biopolitics would thus correct Marx's critiques of materialisms hitherto and, taking up materialism anew as praxis and (post)human subjectivity, fulfill the revolutionary promise of actively transforming the

world rather than passively interpreting it detailed in his 11<sup>th</sup> thesis on Feuerbach. But what if one does not only stand in a relation of *creation, labouring, production* or *re-production* regarding the image or imagination? And what if *matter* came to be understood as what ultimately imposes a *limit* to, an *interruption* of the imagination as power or production? What sites of resistance to biopolitics might thus open up? What role might art have to play therein?

In this essay, I want to point to another possible interpretation of the stakes of aligning the Concept with biopolitical thought that could give one much to dwell on with respect to new materialism if read in terms of the corrective outlined above. In an essay entitled “Form and Fashion,” Jacques Derrida draws on Alain David’s thesis that the worst biopolitical oppressions in racism and anti-Semitism would have something to do with a notion of ‘form’ surviving through Husserl and Heidegger; “*form* itself, the fascination for the form, that is to say for the *visibility* of a certain organic or organizing contour, an *eidos*, if you will, and therefore an idealization, an *idealism* even as it institutes philosophy itself, philosophy or metaphysics as such.”<sup>7</sup> Derrida distinguishes two responses to this formal *Gestell*. The first would be that of a material phenomenology as proposed by Michel Henry, bearing a strong resemblance to the materialist affirmative biopolitics outlined above: a transcendental vitalism emphasizing “pure ‘transcendental life,’ absolute immanence, (...) the pure life of the ‘living,’ (...) the immanence of ‘feeling oneself alive.’”<sup>8</sup> Coole and Frost indeed point to an alliance between new materialism and new vitalism regarding “emergent, generative powers (or agentic capacities) even within inorganic matter, ... eschew[ing] the distinction between organic and inorganic, or animate and inanimate, at the ontological level.”<sup>9</sup> However, Derrida expresses some serious reservations before such an approach, reminding us (without feeling the need to elaborate) of its grave political complicities and dark historical connotations. Heidegger also reads Nietzsche’s vitalization of all organic and inorganic matter as wholly complicit with the culmination of Western thought in technological enframing or positionality and the reduction of beings as a whole to their calculability and use-value, deeming Nietzsche “the most unrestrained [*zügelloseste*] Platonist in the history of Western metaphysics.”<sup>10</sup> The question for both Heidegger and Derrida seems to be if simply inverting an opposition and affirming the material over the ideal or formal is sufficient, or whether a deeper *destruktion* or deconstruction of this opposition in relation to its outside or impossibility is required. In “Form and Fashion,” Derrida thus outlines a second response to this enframing by form: that of an interruptive transcendence

as found in Blanchot and Levinas, one that would discover the *underside* of Concepts and their relation to Form. To go to the underside or the beyond of the concept would impossibly invent “the transcendence of the other that the concept, as it traditionally gives itself to science and philosophy, tends to fix within the objectivity of a *form*.”<sup>11</sup>

What I’ll try to develop in this essay with respect to imagination constitutes an engagement with a non-dialectical materiality as the underside of the Concept, of philosophical discourse and its closure in technobiopolitical positionality. As is well known, Derrida claims in a 1971 interview that everything he writes can be called materialist if matter is understood as radical alterity or heterogeneity, a third term beyond philosophical dualisms: “the insistence on *matter* as the absolute outside of oppositions, the materialist insistence (in contact with what ‘materialism’ has represented as a force of *resistance* in the history of philosophy) seems necessary to me.”<sup>12</sup> Less well-known is that this interview took place only a few months after a 1970-1 seminar entitled *Theory of Philosophical Discourse: The Conditions of Inscription of the Text of Political Philosophy – The Example of Materialism*,<sup>13</sup> of which only the third session has been published as the third and fourth sections of his 1993 essay “Khōra.” The stakes of this latter text are recalled in *Spectres of Marx* in calling for “a materialism without substance: a materialism of the Khōra.”<sup>14</sup> Plato’s *khōra* (commonly space or site, in Greek), despite being seen by many as inaugurating the philosophical notion of matter or ‘*hylē*’ via Aristotle’s interpretation is never in fact referred to as ‘*hylē*’ in Plato’s *Timaeus* (the word *hylē* itself rarely appears in Plato).<sup>15</sup> What *khōra* gives to be thought with respect to matter itself resists its incorporation into philosophical discourse, a *dark matter* for metaphysics, invisible and amorphous, remaining accessible only through the dream or a bastardized myth.<sup>16</sup> I hope to demonstrate that the imagination, itself often a certain ‘third term’ with respect to philosophical discourse, allows one a certain engagement with this materialist resistance, with promising insights into our post-biopolitical futures.

Derrida’s *Materialism* seminar engages a *trivium* of claims that will allow me to further elaborate.

- ◆ despite appearances, materialism is no less guilty than idealism of subordinating its textuality to the signified; to the Idea, concept, sense or truth that precedes its accessory, secondary, accidental inscription.
- ◆ to challenge this hierarchy would thus have to extract materialism from its opposition to idealism or formalism.

◆ the political would thus find itself inscribed within the materialist text; no more a regional, external consideration than its subsumption into a general political ontology.

The imagination, I argue here, allows us to reinterrogate Ponge's poem cited in epigraph, where we ourselves and everything else is read as a dream of matter, the non- or a-signified textual effects of its imagination – releasing matter from its metaphysical determination as the fixed referent, *hypokeimenon* or *subiectum* in the referent-signifier-signified triumvirate. The inscription of the political in this textuality might thus disclose matter as the *impolitical* underside to the Concept, the form/matter binary and its complicity with technobiopolitical positionality, that is: the clearing of a site or place of non-violent resistance, of peace beyond metaphysical differentials of force and counterforce, power and counterpower. Deleuze himself points to resistance as a third term distinct from and anterior to the powers to affect or to be affected.<sup>17</sup> The *imagination*, *matter* and *resistance* would thus constitute three third terms corresponding to Derrida's trivium outlined above. The imagination's engagement of a materialist general textuality anterior to proper, authentic sense and signification, before and beyond biopolitics, would for me constitute the real promise of new materialism.<sup>18</sup> But can one fulfill this promise through the active creation of new images, where imagination is defined as a faculty of intuiting *in the absence of the object* ("**Imagination** is the faculty for representing an object even **without its presence** in intuition"<sup>19</sup>), by actively transforming the *world* rather than passively interpreting it? Or must one not engage this Platonist inversion in a controlled relation to a more radical non-site, atopian or hypertopian, a void or oblivion from which matter images or imagines, dreams and remembers *us*, from the earth without us, *in the absence of ourselves*. Imagining the earth in our absence, in the interruption the arche-elemental imposes on imagination, softly implores to withdraw from controlling or mastering its nonhuman beings – organic and inorganic, animate and inanimate – and leaves these vulnerable dreams of matter's to their own oneiric resolutions. I'll conclude with some tentative reflections on art's role in this oneirology in view of letting the earth be the earth.



In determining the non-metaphysical imagination of matter as it gives itself in *kbōra*, one must examine more closely the status of myth in Plato's thought. Derrida notes that for Hegel, philosophy essentially began when Aristotle abandoned mythological explanation,

subordinated the myth to the signified Concept and turned towards scientific and encyclopedic thinking, adding that Marx and Engels share this preference of Aristotle over Plato. In fact, as I'll explain in a moment, Aristotle specifically sought to reintegrate *khōra* into a metaphysics of substance. But what is *khōra*? In the *Timaeus*, the sensible world of becoming is understood as an *image* of the intelligible ideas or paradigms, begotten through the inscription of copies of these images upon *khōra*, which the latter receives, admits or welcomes. But *khōra* is precisely not an underlying matter, substance or *hypokeimenon* that would take on the forms it receives; its arche-materiality is somehow 'anterior' to the philosophical oppositions of form and matter, intelligible and sensible, being and becoming – and not *both/and* but *neither/nor*: a *neutral* third. Because one can have no fixed or stable *logos* concerning the world of becoming for Plato, one must have recourse to likely accounts; the myth is a discourse on the image outside philosophical scientific or rational discourse. But the situation for *khōra* is even more complex: as *khōra* stands outside all such oppositions, its status in the *Timaeus* occurs as a myth within a myth, accessible only as in a dream, or through a hybrid or bastardized *logos*. As Derrida writes, "*Khōra* can be neither seen nor touched, neither in the proper sensible sense nor in the figurative intelligible sense. The dream here is signification opposed to intuition. *Khōra* can only be signified, but by a signification that is never proper or referable to some proper."<sup>20</sup> The authority of the sign itself is thus put into question; the names given to *khōra* in the *Timaeus* (imprint-bearer, matrix, mother, nurse, receptacle) cannot even be said to be metaphorical, as *khōra* resists any property or propriety to which these might refer. *Khōra*'s typography is, in other words, a non-significative writing, a non-causal effect of matter's imagination.

Aristotle, however, brings *khōra* back into metaphysical discourse by claiming that Plato had identified *khōra* and matter, and was thus unable to think *topos* or the site (what Heidegger translates as *Ort-Raum* [site-space] in our epigraph). And Aristotle's move is quite paradoxical, Derrida adds, since it consists in saying that the *topos* belongs to neither form nor matter, which was precisely the case for *khōra*. Place can be separated from the thing while form and matter cannot, and Plato would have allegedly misunderstood this by determining place as matter, insofar as it constitutes the extension [interval, διάστημα] of magnitude [τοῦ μεγέθους]. "This is why Plato in the *Timaeus* says that matter [ὕλην] and space [χώραν] are the same; for the 'participant' [μεταληπτικὸν] and space [χώραν] are

identical.”<sup>21</sup> As Derrida reminds us, however, Plato never refers to *khōra* as matter (*hylē*) in the *Timaeus*, nor as participant (*metaleptikon*); *khōra* only ‘participates’ in the intelligible insofar as it is invisible, and in the material insofar as it is amorphous; it gives place to these oppositions while being wholly outside them. Aristotle wishes to avoid a substantialization of place and so substantializes *khōra*; matter for him is never a non-being in itself, only by accident. In a sense, what Aristotle seems to want to guard philosophy from is a materialism without substance, without being, a materialism of the *khōra*.

Against this “corporeist or substantialist materialism,” Derrida identifies another interpretation of *khōra* he deems “extensionist or spatialist,” seeking to make of *khōra* an empty space or *extensio*.<sup>22</sup> In his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger however identifies *both khōra and place (topos)* in claiming that Platonic philosophy prepared or anticipated the Cartesian notion of ‘space’ as extension.<sup>23</sup> However, as Derrida notes, this geometrical and mathematical interpretation of *khōra* could only concern *khōra*’s inscribed forms, and not *khōra* itself, which is not a homogeneous extension but “filled with powers that are neither similar nor evenly balanced, no part of it is in balance, it sways irregularly in every direction as it is shaken by those things, and being set in motion it in turn shakes them.”<sup>24</sup> Neither substantialist matter nor empty space, *khōra*’s materialism without substance would have been refused from the beginning of Western philosophy to its closure. But how does this carry over into our discussions of imagination and resistance? Our discussion seems quite theoretical so far; how does it fit into praxis in approaching the promise of new materialism?



Derrida asks a similar question in his 1995 *Advances*: “what time and what reason (speculative or practical) does a theory of the promise fall under?”<sup>25</sup> It’s in the neighbourhood of the materialist promise as something of an antinomy of pure reason that I wish to steer our discussions of the imagination. This in fact brings us back to another, recently published seminar given shortly after *Materialism* entitled *Theory and Practice* (1975-6), which engages the work of Kant, Marx, Heidegger (and Althusser) at length.<sup>26</sup> If the speculative dimensions of the materialist promise for Kant and Marx, one could say, “came to be a matter of doing and acting [*zum Tun und Handeln*],” they would vanish “like the phantom images of a dream [*wie Schattenbilder eines Traums*].”<sup>27</sup> Marx’s 8<sup>th</sup> thesis on Feuerbach argues that all mysteries leading

theory into mysticism can be resolved through human practice. Derrida notes that for both Kant and Marx, the unification of theory of practice into something itself neither theoretical nor practical is still better represented by the practical. But while both philosophers, in their own way, subordinate the theoretical or speculative to the practical, “no more than Marx, Kant does not want to disqualify the speculative here, at the very moment when he says that practice makes its mystical or visionary clouds, oneirism, vanish.”<sup>28</sup> Kant and Marx wish to banish the dream from philosophical praxis, but it could be that this move betrays a certain anxiety. As Heidegger notes, between the first and second editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant would have become *frightened* by the possibility that the transcendental imagination ground the essence of the human and human practice in something unknown, fantastical, worrisome, abysmal.<sup>29</sup> Kant would thus have worked to erase this notion of imagination as the root of both speculative and practical reason, finding comfort in pure reason instead as this common root. In the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, written between the two editions of the first *Critique*, the unity of speculative-theoretical and practical reason is determined as pure reason itself; acting reason [*handelnden Vernunft*].<sup>30</sup> However, even if this displacing the imagination in favour of pure reason allows Kant to focus on the finite rational being in general rather than the human being in particular (a failing for Heidegger, who wishes to reread the first *Critique* as grounding the metaphysics of the human *Dasein*), this would not have spared the allegedly more ‘logical’ second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* from a more nefarious psychologism and anthropologism. The questions *what can I know? what must I do? what can I hope for?* all become subsumed into an anthropology and into the question *what is the human?*, as Heidegger cites Kant: “Basically, we can classify all of these under Anthropology because the first three questions refer to the last.”<sup>31</sup> This binding of a practical reason and praxis to a problematic anthropocentrism poses important problems for new materialism’s dialectical materialist inheritance, and dialectical materialism’s inheritance of a hegelian determination of alienation and labour.

Derrida points to these problems both in the *Materialism* and the *Theory and Practice* seminars in turning to Heidegger. As he cites the latter’s “Letter on Humanism,”

The essence of materialism does not consist in the assertion that everything is simply matter but rather in a metaphysical determination according to which every being appears as the material of labour. The modern metaphysical essence of labour is anticipated in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* as the self-establishing process of



unconditioned production, which is the objectification of the actual through the human being, experienced as subjectivity. The essence of materialism is concealed in the essence of technology, about which much has been written but little has been thought.<sup>32</sup>

Practice and labour are unequivocally a human matter; the spider's web and the bee's hive are not the result of labour.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, the same move that represses sensibility in imagination and frees human practice for its inquiries into hope (outside any mysticism, oneirism or visionary effect) determines the transformation of the world called for in the 11<sup>th</sup> thesis into a question of *production*: "the transformation of nature-raw-matter into products, is indeed a *production*, production itself."<sup>34</sup> Again, it's precisely against the determination of the imagination as a *power* or *production* or *re-production* that I suggested we were best positioned to understand the new (or arch-ancient) materialist promise. At stake in concluding will be an originary material hetero-poiesis ("quite simply alterity, the fact of having one's cause or possibility in another"<sup>35</sup>) at the heart of any creation or imagination, anterior to the theory/practice, *physis/tekhnè*, *physis/poiesis* oppositions. This material underside of the Concept will be shown to interrupt any notion of imagination as production or power, and thus prepare a place, a site of non-violent resistance, where the work of art can play a role in letting the earth be the earth.



I'd adapted Derrida above in asking what *time* and what reason – speculative or practical – a materialist theory of the promise might fall under. Displacing the imagination and the dream allowed both Kant and Marx to interrogate our questions of hope and of transforming the world into a matter of human practice, production. But Heidegger's reading of the Kantian transcendental imagination poses something of a stumbling block to our analyses here, particularly as it relates to time, as it is defined precisely as a threefold "*forming power*" [*bildende Kraft*]" with respect to time: the power to form images (representations of the present), reproduce images (the past), and anticipate images (the future): as this forming faculty, "the transcendental *power* of imagination is originary [*ursprüngliche*] time."<sup>36</sup> Heidegger ultimately comes to determine time in the *Kantbuch* as pure auto-affection; a notion of which Derrida has often detailed the metaphysical belonging. One would thus need to think imagination more radically to engage the non-metaphysical, hetero-affective, heteropoietic

time of the promise, of the materiality of *kbōra*, what Derrida calls the ‘element’ that precedes the elementary, older than the formation of the world or the heavens, “the elementary insofar as it precedes time... no longer as an intelligible paradigm but as element of what will become the heavens or bodies.”<sup>37</sup> In his essay “Tense,” dedicated to the work of John Sallis, Derrida places us well along this path by attempting to think an *other time* in relation to the dream and the imagination. The key to this other time is that one can only *let* it come, one cannot make it come or produce it. However, Derrida notes that “the modern notion of the imagination, notably in its Kantian or post-Kantian provenance, remains deeply tied to the value of production or to the opposition between the productive and the re-productive, between the *power* to produce and the *power* to re-produce.”<sup>38</sup> For Sallis, the imagination is a power that metaphysics will have always sought to exclude, but also draws from. The imagination empowers and activates metaphysics, but also constitutes a certain unpower or finitude, a passive division of non-self-presence that metaphysics will have sought to repress. The history of metaphysics would thus have constituted a dynamics of power and counterpower, force and counterforce, attempting to stabilize this dynamic relation between imagination and metaphysics. In Kant, notably, “the empowering power of the imagination finds itself in its turn disqualified and *excluded* from the ‘domain,’ in other words, from the dynasty, from the field of power that is practical reason.”<sup>39</sup> Practical reason thus stabilizes its dynamic relation to the imagination by distancing itself from it. For Derrida, however, this relation of stabilization is inseparable from a semantics of being; one ought think *stabilization* as taking place against a background of a certain destabilization, a *chaotization* that would not be the in-stability of any being or presence, but rather an unpresence or nonbeing. The condition of the imagination would thus be “a certain thread tied between nonbeing (the beyond of being) and time[.]”<sup>40</sup> Hence, the dynamics of the imagination “lodge within themselves the (incalculable) possibility of the incalculable, and thus a singular debility, an essential impotence – one could also say, an irreducible finitude.”<sup>41</sup> And thus the imagination comes to be thought along side the other third term that is the arche-material *kbōra*, only perceivable in images or dreams.

From the moment there is nothing but images, and from the moment there is no image for *χώρα*, the power of imagination as ‘power of spacing’ finds in *χώρα* (that is, the place of espacement itself) at once its ultimate recourse and its ultimate limit, its condition of possibility *and* of impossibility, its possibility as impossibility, its power as un-power.

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The time of *kbōra* is that of the *other time*, otherwise than being. How do matters stand with respect to space, site or place? It's along these lines that I wish to conclude in situating the role of the work of art in preparing a site of resistance to technobiopolitical positionality. As is well known, one of the biggest changes in Heidegger's thought can be seen in the shift between *Sein und Zeit* and *Zeit und Sein*; one can no longer hold that being and time *are*, but can only say 'es gibt Sein,' 'es gibt Zeit' [*It gives being, it gives time*]. Notably, one of the few concessions Heidegger ever made about a correction in his thought is that "the attempt in *Being and Time*, section 70, to derive human spatiality from temporality is untenable."<sup>42</sup> This placing of spatiality on the same playing field as time will give us much to dwell on, as for Derrida it is not unrelated to a similar shift in accent in Heidegger's thought from "The Origin of the Work of Art" to the "Art and Space" essay cited in epigraph.<sup>43</sup> "The Origin of the Work of Art" problematically concludes in determining all art as a subset of *Dichtung* or poetry, with Heidegger deeming it "questionable whether the essence of poetry... can adequately be thought in terms of imagination and the power of imagining [*imagination und Einbildungskraft*]."<sup>44</sup> Heidegger does not mean here to reduce architecture, the visual arts and music to *poesy* [Poesie], but rather to a language that brings forth beings as beings. "Where language is not present, as in the being of stones, plants or animals, there is also no openness of beings, and consequently no openness either of that which is not a being [*des Nichtseienden*] or of emptiness."<sup>45</sup> So while Heidegger wishes to uncover the thingliness, one could say the materiality of the work of art anterior to its determination as *hypokeimenon*, *subiectum* or the *hylē/morphē* distinction, a site precisely where materiality would come to limit the *power* of imagination, he stumbles in determining this site in terms of (human) language. In this sense, both *poesy* and *Dichtung* would correspond to what Ponge calls a world of words, that of a finite universe, finite as conditioned by the human *Dasein*'s finitude, its authentic and ownmost relation to time, death, others, the world. Here, it's unclear how much the work of art can break with its determination as human praxis, production, power, creation. But matter's non-significative textuality is *indefinite*, to return to Ponge, an indefiniteness that

doesn't metaphysically oppose itself to the finite as the infinite, but I think calls more in the key of an infinite, ahuman, material finitude.

It's not that the question of language is absent from "Art and Space," but it is not presented as the origin of the work of art. Heidegger wishes to show how art gives way to a space or site of dwelling foreclosed, made uninhabitable by the technoscientific notion of space as extension – prepared, let's recall, by *khōra* and *topos* – ultimately as something to be mathematically measured, evaluated and controlled; the space of practice and commerce. We saw Heidegger cite Aristotle in determining the *topos* or *Ort-Raum* as something difficult and hard to grasp. Paralleling Kant's fright before the nonhuman dimensions of the imagination, Heidegger draws on Goethe in describing one's awe, fear and terror in interrogating the arche-phenomenon of space: "an awe to the point of anxiety [*Scheu bis zur Angst*]. For behind space, so it will appear, nothing more is given [*gibt es nichts mehr*] to which it could be traced back. Before space there is no retreat to something else."<sup>46</sup> We can only ask what space is from space itself and, as Derrida interprets it, "it is because there is nothing before or behind it and that it says nothing that we are cut off from it. We are thus cut off from space... we are in space cut off from space."<sup>47</sup> Space comes into play for Heidegger from the inclosing, excluding border around the artwork's heterogeneously formed matter. It is from the work's *limit* – its material border that the site is *released, given its freedom*: "Räume ist Freigabe von Orten"; and I recall that everything at stake here depends on understanding matter as a *limit* to imagination as a *power*, where we find ourselves cut off from the elementary, the earth, and are only called upon to let it be. The arche-material *khōra* gives way to space, to the spatial work or image by withdrawing from it; the materiality that withdraws from the work [*œuvre*] attests to its unworking or inoperativity [*déœuvrement*]. This relation to a non-site, an atopian or hypertopian void is ultimately what disempowers any materialism understood as a technological metaphysics of labour or production; devitalizes any biopolitics understood as a dialectics of force and counterforce, power and counterpower. But a space here opens for art to gesture towards the impolitical underside of technobiopolitical positionality and its reduction of all organic and inorganic matter to their calculability, productibility and use value. Impolitical only because the finitude and vulnerability of matter's dreams offers no ethico-political programme, it only calls out to let beings be, release nature's general oneirological writing, and let the earth be the earth. Here, Heidegger's notion of meditation or mindfulness (*besinnung*) as *Gelassenheit* (which Derrida renders as "calm, abandonment,

serenity, opening that lets be,”<sup>48</sup>) allows us to conclude in thinking this site in the key of the imagination: “In meditation we go towards a site [*Ort*] from out of which first opens the space [*Raum*] traversed at any given time by all our doing and leaving undone [*Tun und Lassen*].”<sup>49</sup>

March, 2018

<sup>1</sup> Francis Ponge, *Nouveau Recueil* (Paris, Gallimard, 1967), p. 177. “Probably, each and all – and we ourselves – are nothing but immediate dreams of divine Matter:/ the textual products of its prodigious imagination./ And thus, in a sense, one could say that the whole of nature, humans included, is nothing but a writing; but a writing of a certain genre; a *non-significative* writing, in that it refers to no system of signification; that it is a question of an indefinite universe: properly speaking *immense*, without measures./ While the world of words is a finite universe.” Where no published translation exists, translations from the French will be our own.

<sup>2</sup> “Place is thought to be something important and hard to grasp.” Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation volume I*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 360.

<sup>3</sup> “‘It appears, however, to be something overwhelming and hard to grasp, the topos’ – that is, site-space.” Martin Heidegger, *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens: 1910-1976* (Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), p. 203; trans. Charles H. Siebert as “Art and Space” in *Man and World* 6,1 (1983): 3-8, p. 3. Translation modified.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Pheng Cheah, “Non-Dialectical Materialism,” in Diane Coole and Samantha Frost, eds. *New Materialism: Ontology, Agency and Politics* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 70-91.

<sup>5</sup> Diane Coole and Samantha Frost, “Introducing the New Materialisms” in *New Materialisms*, p. 8. Emphasis modified.

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed critique of affirmative biopolitics in Braidotti, Hardt, Negri and Esposito, see my chapter “Biopolitics and Double Affirmation” in *Futures of Life Death on Earth: Derrida’s General Ecology* (forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Derrida, “La forme et la façon (plus jamais : envers et contre tout, ne plus jamais penser ça ‘pour la forme’” foreword to Alain David, *Racisme et antisémitisme: Essai de philosophie sur l’envers de concepts* (Paris, Ellipses, 2001), p. 10. One could, of course, challenge this survival in Husserl via his understanding of the *hylē* as *ichfremde kern* in the C-manuscripts, or even his reference to formless matter in *Ideas I*, or Heidegger’s understanding of *morphē* anterior to the determination of being as *idea* and *eidos*. See chapters 2 and 3 of *Futures of Life Death on Earth*.

<sup>8</sup> Derrida, “Form and Fashion,” pp. 16-7.

<sup>9</sup> Coole and Frost, “Introducing the New Materialisms,” p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, ed. William MacNeill. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 174.

<sup>11</sup> Derrida, “Form and Fashion,” p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 66. Translation and emphasis modified.

<sup>13</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Théorie du discours philosophique II: Les Conditions d’inscription du texte de philosophie politique (L’Exemple du matérialisme)*. Jacques Derrida papers. MS-C001. Special Collections and Archives, The UC Irvine Libraries, Irvine, California. Box 10, Folders 16-17. Cf. “Khōra” in *On the Name*, trans. Ian McLeod (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 148-9, n. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London, Routledge Classics, 2006), p. 212.

<sup>15</sup> Derrida references certain examples. Cf. Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis, Hackett University Press, 1997); for *hylē* as building materials *Statesman* 272a (p. 314); *Philebus* 54c (pp. 443-444); for *hylē* as firewood, see *Laws* VI, 761c (p. 1436); VIII 843d (p.1504) and 849d (p. 1510).

<sup>16</sup> I credit artist Jenny Schade with the suggestion of thinking *khōra* as ‘dark’ matter.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (New York, Semiotext(e), 2006), p. 255; *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988), pp. 89-90.

<sup>18</sup> For an important materialist reading of Derrida’s general text, see the work of Vicki Kirby, and especially in relation to new materialism, see “Matter out of Place: New Materialism in Review” in Vicki Kirby, ed. *What if Culture was Nature All Along?* (The Tun, Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 256. Heidegger also cites an earlier identical definition from the *Anthropology*; “Die

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Einbildungskraft (facultas imaginandi) [ist] ein Vermögen der Anschauungen auch ohne Gegenwart des Gegenstandes." Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, cited in Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, (Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1991), p. 128.

<sup>20</sup> Derrida, *Materialism*, §4, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, *Complete Works*, p. 356. Aristotle adds that "It is true, indeed, that the account he gives there of the 'participant' is different from what he says in his so-called unwritten teaching. Nevertheless he did identify place and space." Ibid., p. 356-7.

<sup>22</sup> Derrida, *Matérialisme*, §5, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000), p. 70;

<sup>24</sup> Plato, *Complete Works*, p. 1255.

<sup>25</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Advances*, trans. Philippe Lynes (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2017), p. 33 n.11. For my other work on the promise in *Advances*, see my introduction, "Auparadvances," pp. ix-xxvii as well as "The Posthuman Promise of the Earth" in Matthias Fritsch, Philippe Lynes and David Wood, eds. *Eco-Deconstruction: Derrida and Environmental Philosophy* (New York, Fordham University Press, 2018), pp. 101-120.

<sup>26</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Théorie et pratique: Cours de l'ENS-Ulm 1975-1976* (Paris, Galilée, 2017).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 503.

<sup>28</sup> Derrida, *Théorie et pratique*, p. 53.

<sup>29</sup> "Ihn die transzendente Einbildungskraft schreckte." Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, p. 168. For Derrida's discussion of this, see §§ 2 and 3 of the 1980-1 seminar *Le Respect*. Jacques Derrida papers. MS-C001. Special Collections and Archives, The UC Irvine Libraries, Irvine, California. Box 15, Folders 18-19. § 4 is an early version of "Before the Law."

<sup>30</sup> Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Cited in Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics: Fifth Edition, Enlarged*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1997), p. 146.

<sup>32</sup> Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, p. 259.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Derrida, *Théorie et pratique*, p. 123. Similarly, in the *Materialism* seminar, Derrida notes that consciousness and language, which are general conditions of ideology, are said by Marx to constitute exclusively human modes of relation; the animal has no relations. Derrida proposes to "leave aside the very classical opposition, the very metaphysical division between animality (non speaking, non conscious, non social) and speaking, conscious and socialized humanity, entering into relation with what is other for it, etc." Derrida, *Matérialisme*, §2, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> Derrida, *Théorie et pratique*, p. 93.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>36</sup> Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, p. 131 translation and emphasis modified.

<sup>37</sup> Derrida, *Matérialisme*, §4, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Tense," trans. David Farrell Krell in *The Path of Archaic Thinking: Unfolding the Work of John Sallis* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1995), p. 50.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>42</sup> Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1972), p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> Although Derrida, as always, takes numerous precautions not to over-hastily assimilate the two shifts in tonality. The argument that follows above is (at times very loosely) adapted from the three years of Derrida's *The Thing* seminar on Ponge, Heidegger and Blanchot. Spatial constraints here have barred the way for an in-depth discussion of imagination in Blanchot's work, particularly in "Two Versions of the Imaginary." Many of the arguments in this essay will find a more thorough elaboration in *Dearth: Eco-Deconstruction after Speculative Realism* (Blanchot, Derrida, Heidegger), in preparation.

<sup>44</sup> Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, ed. and trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 45.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>46</sup> Heidegger, "Die Kunst und der Raum," p. 205; "Art and Space," p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Jacques Derrida, *La Chose* (Heidegger/Blanchot), §2, p. 18. Jacques Derrida papers. MS-C001. Special Collections and Archives, The UC Irvine Libraries, Irvine, California. Box 13, Folders 11-17.

<sup>48</sup> Derrida, *Théorie et pratique*, p. 126.

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<sup>49</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Wissenschaft und Besinnung,” in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 2000); trans. William Lovitt as “Science and Reflection,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York, Garland Publishing, 1977), p. 180, translation modified.